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# INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

Program Framework

December 2004



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# Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program

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# Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program

## A. Introduction

### **Introduction**

The health and safety of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) claimants is a priority for Government. Canada has heard from many former students, their families and communities that disclosures of abuse are often emotionally traumatic, and as such mental health supports should be made available and accessible for all former IRS students who are actively resolving their IRS legal claim (hereafter referred to as 'claimants'). Since 1997, Canada has resolved over 1,809 IRS legal claims.<sup>1</sup> In order to ensure the safety of claimants, Canada developed an IRS Mental Health Support Program to provide mental health supports for eligible claimants. The Mental Health Support Program was developed in response to feedback from former IRS students, and in partnership with Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada's Aboriginal advisory body. The IRS Mental Health Support Program is one of the key components of the National Resolution Framework.

### **The National Resolution Framework**

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) was established in June 2001 to resolve claims associated with the legacy of the residential school system. In December 2002, IRSRC announced the creation of a National Resolution Framework. A key element of the National Resolution Framework is an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process to administer, validate and resolve claims in a timely and supportive manner as an alternative to the court system. This process is supported by the IRS Mental Health Support Program that aims to ensure the health and safety of individual claimants who are actively resolving their ADR or litigation claims.

If you are interested in learning more about IRSRC or the ADR process, please call the Indian Residential Schools Helpdesk at 1-800-816-7293 or visit IRSRC's Web site at [www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca](http://www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca).

### **The IRS Mental Health Support Program Summary**

The First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), Health Canada works in partnership with IRSRC to coordinate and fund services available under the IRS Mental Health Support Program.



# Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program

## A. Introduction

The Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Mental Health Support Program provides mental health counselling services and transportation services for all eligible claimants through Health Canada's Regional Offices. Each Regional Office has an IRS Regional Coordinator to help claimants access mental health and emotional support services and process these requests within the policies of this framework. Eligible claimants may include any former IRS student with a claim against Canada who is in the process of actively resolving their claim through the ADR Process or in litigation.

FNIHB, Health Canada will coordinate the following Mental Health Support Program services for claimants:

- (1) **Mental Health Counselling** - will be provided based on receipt of a completed treatment plan which includes the number of recommended counselling sessions and cost, from a Health Canada recognized Mental Health Service Provider and approved by FNIHB.
- (2) **Transportation** - will be provided to access limited individual/family mental health counselling and/or transportation to access Elder/Healer services that are not available in the home community and are approved by FNIHB (nearest appropriate service).
- (3) **Resolution Health Support Worker (RHSW)** - culturally appropriate emotional support services will be available in areas where there are high numbers of claimants. These services will be provided by individual RHSWs working through Aboriginal or Aboriginally-affiliated organizations funded by FNIHB. The services of the RHSW include, but will not be limited to, providing a variety of front-line support and coordination services directly to claimants involved in the ADR or litigation processes. RHSW activities will vary based on regional differences, but will also attempt to build relationships with key stakeholders in an effort to promote a greater understanding of the IRS Mental Health Support Program.

# Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program

## A. Introduction

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) will fund and monitor the following IRS Mental Health Support Program service for claimants:

- (4) **IRS Crisis Line (Toll Free)** - the IRS Crisis Line is a professional and flexible safety support net that can be accessed toll-free, 24-hours a day in any region of the country by IRS claimants or their support networks. The IRS Crisis Line is administered and operated by an Aboriginal organization with trained Aboriginal crisis counsellors. The IRS Crisis Line will connect callers to local services when appropriate and can provide information about the National Resolution Framework or other health support information that is being offered by the Government of Canada. The national IRS Crisis Line can be reached at 1-866-925-4419.



## B. Program Overview

### **Program Objectives**

- To ensure that former students of Indian Residential Schools (IRS), who are resolving a legal claim against the Government of Canada, have access to an appropriate level of mental health counselling and culturally appropriate emotional support services.
- To ensure that former students of IRS can safely address a broad spectrum of mental health issues related to the disclosure of childhood abuse(s) they may face.

### **Program Philosophy**

- To provide eligible claimants with non-judgmental, sensitive, compassionate mental health and culturally appropriate emotional support.

### **Program Principles**

IRS Mental Health Support Program staff strive to manage the program in a manner that meets each of the following principles:

- Claimant safety is the number one priority;
- Claimants are safe during ADR and litigation processes by providing mental health and culturally appropriate emotional support to claimants through coordination with IRSRC;
- Consistent delivery of the IRS Mental Health Support Program services, in accordance with this program framework;
- Identify best-practices and raise operational and policy concerns as they emerge;
- Communication with Health Canada staff and with other partners involved in the process;
- Operate with flexibility and common sense with regard to the provision of all elements of the program;
- Be informed of and respect the privacy rights of all claimants; and
- Be accountable for all IRS Mental Health Support Program expenditures.



# Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program

## C. Program Services Chart

Service	Delivered by:	Administered by:	Service Description
Resolution Health Support Workers (RHSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal or Aboriginally-affiliated organizations deliver service</li> </ul>	Health Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional support to claimants during all phases of the resolution process with a focus on ADR and litigation events.</li> <li>Refer claimants to other appropriate support services if and when required, including professional counselling.</li> <li>Attend workshops and conferences to promote a better understanding of the IRS Mental Health Support Program.</li> </ul>
Individual Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated by IRS Regional Coordinator</li> <li>Delivered by a Mental Health Services Provider</li> </ul>	Health Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available to all claimants in ADR or active litigation processes, regardless of status (First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Non-Status or Non-Aboriginal) or place of residence.</li> <li>Claimants do not have to be in a crisis situation to access mental health counselling.</li> </ul>
Family Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated by IRS Regional Coordinator</li> <li>Delivered by a Mental Health Service Provider</li> </ul>	Health Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When required, limited counselling sessions are provided for the claimant's immediate family members.</li> </ul>
Group Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated by IRS Regional Coordinator</li> <li>Delivered by Mental Health Service Provider</li> </ul>	Health Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When individuals in ADR or litigation processes request group counselling, counselling sessions can be arranged with the IRS Regional Coordinator.</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated by IRS Regional Coordinator</li> </ul>	Health Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate and fund transportation for claimants and their families residing in remote areas to access approved counselling and/or transportation to access Elder/Healer services.</li> </ul>
IRS Crisis Line (1-800-816-7293)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered by an Aboriginal organization</li> </ul>	Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to 24/7 emotional support and crisis counselling to ensure support to those who are triggered by the application form.</li> <li>Allows survivors, and their support networks, to gain support at any stage of the process.</li> <li>Enables referrals to be made to Mental Health Service Providers either under IRS Mental Health Support Program or to other available local, regional or provincial/territorial services.</li> </ul>

## D. Resolution Health Support Workers

### **Purpose**

- To provide a variety of flexible 'front-line' emotional supports and coordination of services directly to IRS claimants involved in the ADR or litigation processes.
- The RHSW services can be accessed at any stage of the ADR or litigation process (hearings, litigation events and during the application phase of either process, etc.).

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

- Provide emotional support to IRS claimants during all phases of the resolution process with a focus on ADR and litigation events when requested (e.g. "on-the-scene" emotional support and/or telephone follow up);
- Identify claimant support needs offered within the IRS Mental Health Support Program;
- Refer IRS claimants to existing community services and supports;
- Ensure claimants are aware of their scheduled ADR or litigation events and are aware of how to access financial support to bring a support person to their hearing session (funded by IRSRC as part of the ADR process);
- Provide a liaison role between Health Canada, IRSRC and Aboriginal communities in raising awareness about the National Resolution Framework and support needs of former students; and
- Communicate with Health Canada in order to identify high claimant activity areas, emerging and emergency situations.

### **Accessing RHSW Services**

A former IRS attendee or family member may request RHSW services through any of the following methods:

- A claimant calls their IRS Regional Coordinator directly;
- An IRSRC Resolution Manager can make a request for supports on behalf of a claimant or as a safety measure for an upcoming ADR or litigation event; or
- A third party (e.g. IRS Crisis Line, Resolution Manager, lawyer) will refer and may assist a claimant in accessing RHSW services.



## E. Mental Health Counselling

### **Purpose**

- To coordinate and fund mental health counselling services;
- To coordinate and fund transportation costs, when required, to access the nearest appropriate counselling and/or Elder/Healer services.

**Note:** Mental health counselling and transportation services require prior approval (based on the requirements of this framework) which can be obtained from your IRS Regional Coordinator.

### **Eligibility**

All IRS claimants (regardless of status or place of residence) who fall under one of these categories:

- Have been accepted into the Model A or B of the ADR process; or
- Who are actively participating in a form of litigation (excluding criminal cases).

### **Accessing Mental Health Counselling**

**Claimants:**

An eligible IRS claimant may seek mental health counselling services funded through Health Canada's IRS Mental Health Support Program by any of the following methods:

- A claimant approaches a Health Canada regional office directly;
- An IRSRC Resolution Manager can make a request for support on behalf of a claimant or as a safety measure for an upcoming ADR or litigation event; or
- A third party (e.g. IRS Crisis Line, RHSW, lawyer) will refer and may assist a claimant to access mental health counselling.

**Family Members:**

Family members of an IRS claimant who is actively resolving his/her claim within Model A of the ADR process may access counselling when:

- A need for family counselling is outlined on a claimant treatment plan by a Health Canada recognized Mental Health Service Provider;



## E. Mental Health Counselling

- The family member or members have been providing direct emotional support to the related IRS claimant prior to and during their ADR or litigation process;
- A qualified Mental Health Service Provider may recommend to Health Canada that immediate family members of an IRS claimant should be approved to obtain counselling. Such sessions should take the form of family therapy sessions, however, individual sessions may take place if recommended and approved by the FNIHB regional psychologist.

### Group Counselling:

Groups of claimants who have been determined to be eligible by IRSRC (since November 2003) to resolve their claims together through the ADR or litigation processes can access IRS Mental Health Support Program services as follows:

- When a group is accepted by IRSRC, the assigned Resolution Manager (RM), as part of his/her responsibility to inform the group regarding the process, takes steps to ensure that the group understands the information it has received concerning the IRS Mental Health Support Program;
- The group meets with the RM and the IRS Regional Coordinator to explore the various support options available to the group (e.g. individual counselling, group counselling, family counselling, or transportation to access sessions with an Elder/Healer);
- Transportation and counselling policies will be fully explained at this time;
- The group then works collaboratively with the Mental Health Service Provider to identify its treatment objectives, and the nature and extent of the IRS mental health support needed, including numbers of sessions and transportation requirements if needed;
- The Mental Health Service Provider will then submit treatment plans detailing the total number of sessions required by the individuals and/or group, including any transportation requirements;

## E. Mental Health Counselling

- The treatment plan is reviewed and approved according to IRS Mental Health Support Program policies, and steps are taken to monitor the delivery of the plan.

### **Expiration of Counselling Sessions**

A claimant's ability to access mental health counselling through the IRS Mental Health Support Program ends:

- When a claimant has accessed all of his/her treatment plan recommended counselling sessions; or
- 90 days after settlement has been reached in either the ADR or litigation processes.

### **Appeals of Denied IRS Mental Health Support Program Services**

If a claimant's request for services is denied, the claimant has the right to appeal the decision. There are three levels of appeal, each of which has to be initiated by the claimant (not the Mental Health Service Provider). In each case, supporting information will be required and reviewed. The decision will be made based on the claimant's needs and the IRS Mental Health Support Program policies. Information about the appeals process can be accessed through your IRS Regional Coordinator.

### **Eligibility of Mental Health Service Providers**

Potential claimants may identify a Mental Health Service Provider they wish to work with under the MHSP, however registration with Health Canada is required. If a claimant's preferred Mental Health Service Provider is qualified but not registered, he/she should begin the process to become registered immediately by contacting the appropriate IRS Regional Coordinator.

Mental Health Service Providers recognized by Health Canada must have the following qualifications:

- Registration as a psychologist in the province/territory in which service is being provided with clinical or counselling orientation; or

## E. Mental Health Counselling

- Registration as a social worker in the province/territory in which service is being provided (MSW or PhD in social work with clinical orientation); and
- A member in good standing with his/her provincial/territorial College or Association.

Mental Health Service Provider qualifications may vary from region to region. Please contact the IRS Regional Coordinator in your region if you are interested in becoming a recognized Mental Health Service Provider.

Note: Exceptions may be made in cases where there are a limited number of Mental Health Service Providers and/or Aboriginal Mental Health Service Providers.

If you or someone you know would like to access any of the above mentioned services, please contact the IRS Regional Coordinator in your home province or territory. A full list of IRS Regional Coordinators is attached in Appendix I.



## IRS MHSP Regional Coordinators

### Atlantic Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Maritime Centre  
1505 Barrington Street  
15th Floor, Suite 1525  
Halifax, NS B3J 3Y6  
1-866-414-8111

### Québec Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Guy-Favreau Complex  
200 René Lévesque Blvd. West  
East Tower, 2nd Floor  
Montréal, QC H2Z 1X4  
1-877-583-2965

### Ontario Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Emerald Plaza  
1547 Merivale Road  
3rd Floor, Postal Locator 6103A  
Nepean, ON K1A 0L3  
1-888-301-6426

### Manitoba Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Stanley Knowles Federal Building  
391 York Avenue, Suite 300  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W1  
1-866-818-3505

### Saskatchewan Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Château Tower, 18th Floor  
1920 Broad Street  
Regina, SK S4P 3V2  
1-866-250-1529

### Alberta Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Canada Place  
9700 Jasper Avenue, Suite 730  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4C3  
1-888-495-6588

### Pacific Region

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Federal Building  
757 West Hastings Street, Suite 540  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3E6  
1-877-477-0775

### Northern Secretariat (Yukon)

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Elijah Smith Building  
Suite 100 - 300 Main Street  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2B5  
1-800-464-8106

### Northern Secretariat

#### (Northwest Territories and Nunavut)

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Health Canada  
Sixty Queen Building  
14th Floor, Postal Locator 3914A  
60 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9  
1-866-509-1769

Indian Residential Schools Help Desk: 1-800-816-7293

Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419

Appendix 3

**Acronym Glossary**

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
FNIHB	First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
IRS	Indian Residential Schools
IRSRC	Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
MHSP	Mental Health Support Program
RHSW	Resolution Health Support Worker
RM	Resolution Manager

## Appendix 3

### Definitions

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process:	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a voluntary process that offers a timely and out-of-court way to resolve claims of physical, sexual abuse and wrongful confinement suffered at Indian Residential Schools. It also provides services such as the IRS Mental Health Support Program and Commemoration.
Claimant:	A person making a residential schools claim, either in litigation or in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Process.
Counselling:	Sessions with a Mental Health Service Provider for help dealing with personal, social or psychological problems or difficulties related to residential school abuse.
Eligible Claimant:	IRS claimants, regardless of status or place of residence, who have been accepted into Model A or B in the ADR process or who are actively participating in a form of litigation.
IRS Regional Coordinator:	A Health Canada regional staff member, who is responsible for the coordination of all IRS Mental Health Support Program components, in their province/territory.
Litigation:	A court claim, lawsuit or legal proceeding in a court of law.
Mental Health Service Provider:	<p>A Mental Health Service Provider recognized by Health Canada must have the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration as a psychologist in the province/territory in which service is being provided with clinical or counselling orientation; or</li> <li>• Registration as a social worker in the province/territory in which service is being provided (MSW or PhD in social work with clinical orientation); and</li> <li>• A member in good standing with their provincial/territorial College or Association.</li> </ul> <p>Mental Health Service Provider qualifications may vary from region to region.</p>
Models A & B:	<p>The Alternative Dispute Resolution Process has two models that address different types of claims: Model A and Model B. For more detailed information, please consult the ADR Guide which may be accessed at the following Web address:</p> <p><a href="http://www.irsrrqpi.gc.ca/english/dispute_resolution_guide.html">http://www.irsrrqpi.gc.ca/english/dispute_resolution_guide.html</a></p>



## Appendix 3

### Definitions

Resolution Manager (RM):	Resolution Managers are government employees who will be assigned residential school claims and who will act for and represent the government. Resolution Managers will be the contact people for all matters relating to claims. They will coordinate the research of the documents that the government will gather. They will review claims and all documents submitted by all parties. Resolution Managers will try to locate witnesses and persons identified as abusers. They will suggest areas which they believe should be examined by the decision-maker, and may suggest more questions at the hearings. At the end of the hearings, they may give their views to the decision-maker on individual claims. Throughout the process, a government lawyer may work with the Resolution Manager on your residential school claim.
Resolution Health Support Worker (RHSW):	A component of the IRS Mental Health Support Program which is delivered through an Aboriginal or Aboriginally-affiliated organization. RHSWs provide a variety of flexible 'front-line' emotional support services directly to IRS claimants and their family members, if required.
Treatment Plan:	Based on an initial assessment, a Health Canada recognized Mental Health Service Provider will develop a treatment plan for an individual claimant. The treatment plan will outline the number of counselling sessions and associated cost for a claimant to be supported while his/her claim is active in either ADR or the litigation processes.
IRS Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419	The IRS Crisis Line is one of the components of the National Resolution Framework, IRSRC. This service is operated and managed by an Aboriginal service provider to provide 24/7 emotional support and crisis counselling to any caller in need and is accessible from all regions in Canada.



